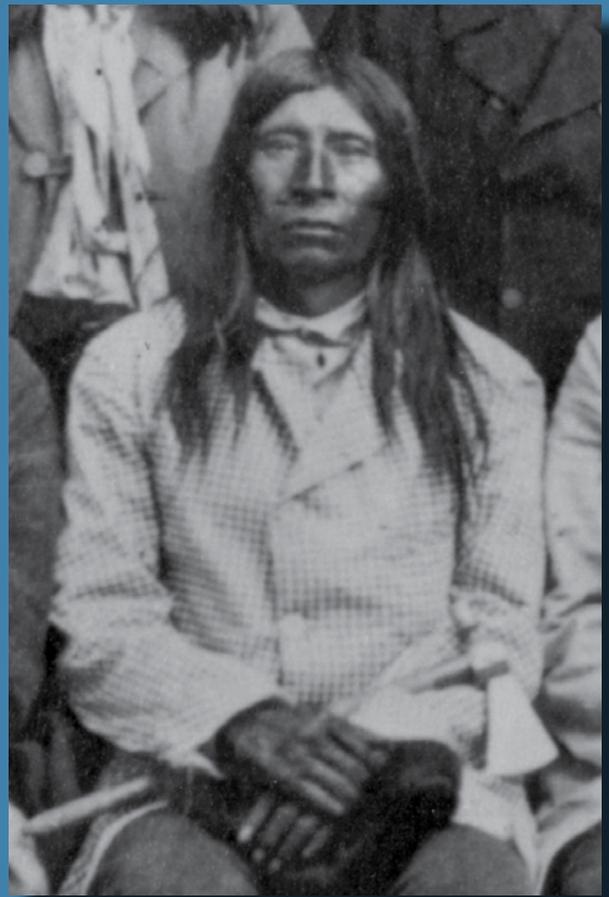
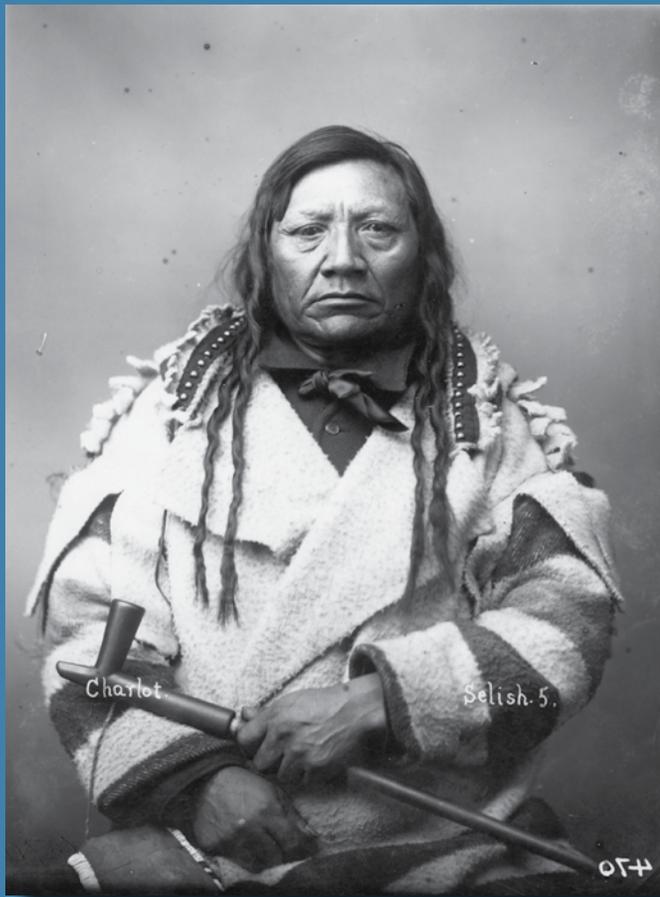


Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee

Historical Background for

# Portraits of Séliš and Qłispé Chiefs in Council Chambers



## Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee

### Information RE: Portraits of Chiefs in Council Chambers

2022 rev.

The three portraits of chiefs in Council Chambers represent the three tribes—*Séliš* (Salish), *Qłispé* (Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille), and *Ksanka* (Kootenai)—and also three different generations of leaders, reaching from the time of the Hellgate Treaty to the Indian Reorganization Act and the new CSKT constitution:

- On the left in the Council chambers is the *Séliš* head chief *Stm̄xe Q̄wox̄qeys* (Claw of the Small Grizzly Bear, known in English as Chief Charlo). He lived from about 1830 to 1910; he served as head chief of the *Séliš* from 1870 to 1910.
- In the center is the Pend d'Oreille head chief *Tmt̄x̄cín* (No Horses, known in English as Chief Alexander). He lived from about 1810 to 1868; he served as head chief of the upper *Qłispé* from the 1840s to 1868.
- On the right is the Kootenai head chief Kustata (also spelled Koostahtah) Big Knife. He lived from 1856 to 1942; he served as head chief of Elmo-Dayton Kootenai from 1902 to 1942.

Following is a table of the head chiefs for each of the three tribes for each of three time periods. (The information on Kootenai head chiefs should be confirmed with the Kootenai Culture Committee.) We have highlighted in yellow the chiefs in the portraits:

HEAD CHIEFS OF THE THREE TRIBES FROM THE HELLGATE TREATY TO THE IRA:			
DATE / PERIOD	TRIBE		
	SÉLIŠ (SALISH)	QŁISPÉ (KALISPEL / PEND D'OREILLE)	KSANKA (KOOTENAI)
1855 (Hellgate Treaty)	<i>X̄wet̄x̄cín</i> (Many Horses, known in English as Chief Victor) (c. 1790-1870)	<i>Tmt̄x̄cín</i> (No Horses—Chief Alexander) (c. 1810-1868)	Michelle
late 1800s - early 1900s	<i>Stm̄xe Q̄wox̄qeys</i> (Claw of the Small Grizzly Bear, known in English as Chief Charlo) (c. 1830-1910)	<i>X̄weʔx̄w̄īts̄ce</i> (Many Grizzly Bears, in the Tuñáxn dialect—Michel) (d. 1909)  succeeded by <i>N̄šalqn</i> (Sapiel Charley Michel) (c. 1863-1929)	Eneas Paul Big Knife (1828-1901)
1935 (CSKT constitution)	<i>Maltá</i> (Chief Martin Charlo) (1856-1941)	Mose Michell (c. 1885-1944)	Kustata Big Knife (1856-1942)

On the following pages, we offer additional information about the Salish chief *Stm̄xe Q̄wox̄qeys* (Claw of the Small Grizzly Bear — Chief Charlo) and the Pend d'Oreille chief *Tmt̄x̄cín* (No Horses — Chief Alexander).

## Słm̄x̄e Q̄<sup>w</sup> oḡ<sup>w</sup> qeys — Claw of the Small Grizzly Bear (Chief Charlo)

(Information from many sources, including SQCC, A Brief History of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille Tribes)

On the left in the Council chambers is the Salish chief Słm̄x̄e Q̄<sup>w</sup> oḡ<sup>w</sup> qeys, which means Claw of the Small Grizzly Bear. He was known in English as Chief Charlo. He was born about 1830, the son of X<sup>w</sup> ełx̄łcín (Many Horses) and Rosalie. Słm̄x̄e Q̄<sup>w</sup> oḡ<sup>w</sup> qeys became an accomplished warrior as a young man.

His father, X<sup>w</sup> ełx̄łcín, was chosen to be head chief of the Salish in the 1840s, and in 1855, served as the leader of the three confederated tribes during the Hellgate Treaty negotiations. He rebuffed the government's pressures to get the Salish to give up the Bitterroot Valley. X<sup>w</sup> ełx̄łcín's resistance forced the government to insert into the treaty Article 11, which prohibited non-Indian settlement in the Bitterroot Valley until and unless the President determined, on the basis of the area being "carefully surveyed and examined," that it was not the best place for the needs of the Salish people. Due in part to poor translation during the treaty meetings, tribal leaders understood Article 11 to mean that the Bitterroot would remain a Salish reservation forever.

On July 14, 1870, X<sup>w</sup> ełx̄łcín died during a buffalo hunt east of the mountains. Słm̄x̄e Q̄<sup>w</sup> oḡ<sup>w</sup> qeys was chosen to be head chief.

Słm̄x̄e Q̄<sup>w</sup> oḡ<sup>w</sup> qeys became chief during an extremely difficult period in Salish history. By that time, the buffalo were being rapidly wiped out, mainly by non-Indian market hunters. Inter-tribal conflicts were continuing. And now with the death of the widely respected X<sup>w</sup> ełx̄łcín, non-Indians only intensified their efforts to force the Salish out of the Bitterroot. In 1871, at the urgings of white settlers and the territorial delegate, President Ulysses S. Grant issued an Executive Order which falsely stated that that the required survey had been carried out, that the Bitterroot had been determined "not to be better adapted to the wants of the Flathead Tribe," and that the Salish were therefore to be "removed" to the Jocko or Flathead Reservation. In June 1872, the US appointed future President James A. Garfield, the Republican party leader in Congress and a former Civil War General, to proceed to Montana and negotiate the terms of the Salish removal.

But Słm̄x̄e Q̄<sup>w</sup> oḡ<sup>w</sup> qeys remembered the words of his father. He told Garfield that this was where the bones of his ancestors were buried, and he would not leave. Chief Charlo's son and successor as head chief, Martin Charlo, later recalled that his father refused to move even an Army officer threatened to "send an army in there and kill us if we didn't move." Garfield did induce Arlee and Adolphe, two subchiefs, to sign the agreement. Garfield reported that he thought Chief Charlo would change his mind, and that the U. S. should "proceed with the work in the same manner as though Charlot, first chief, had signed the contract." The official copies published for the Senate for the vote on ratification had an "x" mark next to Chief Charlo's name. When Chief Charlo denounced this as a forgery, he was vilified in Montana's press as a liar and a treaty violator. This continued until 1883, when Senator George G. Vest ordered a clerk in Washington to dig up the original field copy of the agreement, which revealed no "x" mark next to Chief Charlo's name. Chief



X<sup>w</sup> ełx̄łcín (Many Horses — Chief Victor), 1864.  
Courtesy Bitter Root Valley Historical Society.

Charlo was telling the truth. His “x” mark had in fact been forged onto the official published copy of the Garfield agreement.

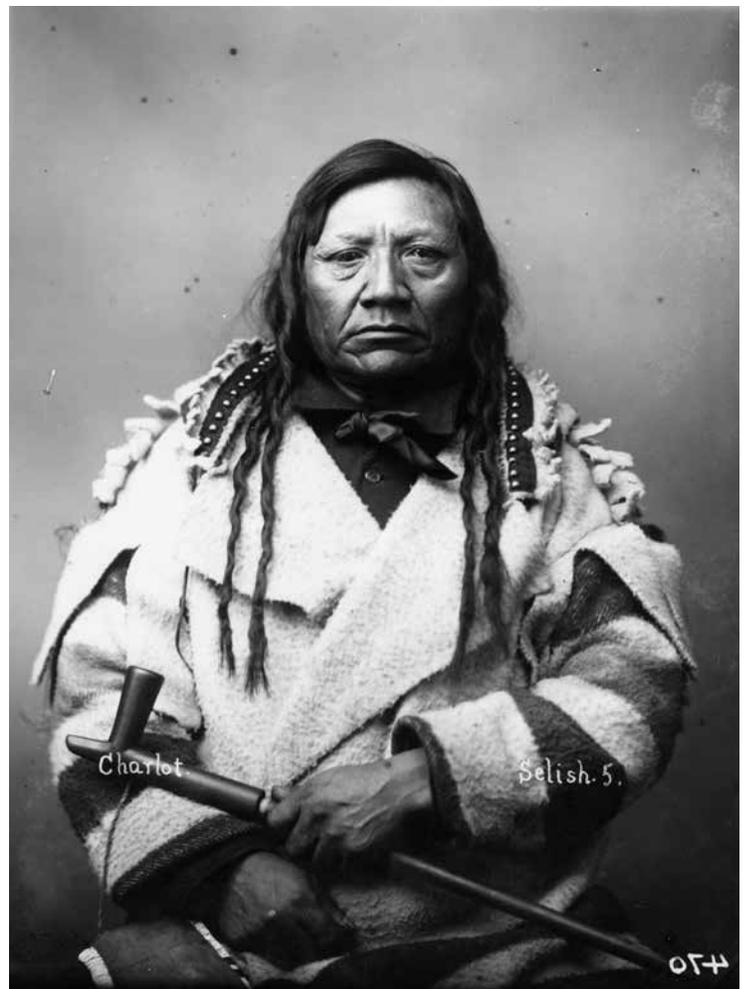
The government nevertheless proceeded as if the Garfield agreement had been signed by the Chief. Over the following years, about twenty families followed Arlee and Adolphe to the Flathead Reservation. But the majority of the Salish stayed with Słm̓x̓e Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys in the Bitterroot Valley. The Government required the Salish who remained in the Bitterroot to take individual allotments of land, and seized the rest of the Salish lands for white settlement. Even the Salish allotments were then encroached upon or altogether taken by a new influx of non-Indian settlers.

At the same time, with the buffalo gone and other game in decline, more Salish people were supplementing their traditional foods with farming. Some officials of Missoula County, which claimed jurisdiction over the Bitterroot Valley, attempted to tax the newly defined Salish land and property. According to the Missoulian, Chief Charlo responded to this attempted taxation by saying,

“The white man wants us to pay him....for the things we have from our god and our forefathers; for things he never owned and never gave us..He has filled graves with our bones..his course is destruction; he spoils what the spirit who gave us this country made beautiful and clean....To take and to lie should be burned on his forehead..We owe him nothing. He owes us more than he will pay....I have more to say, my people, but this much I have said....His laws never gave us a blade of grass nor a tree nor a duck nor a grouse nor a trout.... You know that he comes as long as he lives, and takes more and more, and dirties what he leaves.”

Słm̓x̓e Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys nevertheless stuck to the longstanding Salish policy of non-violent resistance. But some settlers were still fearful of the Salish, or at least they claimed such fear as a rationale for the establishment of a military post, which would bring steady income to the non-Indian economy of the area. In 1877, Fort Missoula was established with a threadbare crew of poorly equipped soldiers.

Just after Fort Missoula’s establishment, Chief Joseph and the non-treaty Nez Perce, pursued by the Army, moved east over Lolo Pass and approached the Bitterroot Valley. White settlers in Montana, the memory of the 1876 Little Bighorn battle fresh in their minds, frantically raised alarms about a supposed Salish alliance with the Nez Perce to exterminate all whites in the region. Słm̓x̓e Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys, however, refused to ally with the Nez Perce, although they were the ancient allies and relations of the Salish. Słm̓x̓e Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys warned the Nez Perce not to harm any whites, or the Salish would fight against them. He was trying to prevent further war — which would have probably been disastrous for the Salish — by forming a



Słm̓x̓e Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys (Claw of the Little Grizzly — Chief Charlo), portrait taken in Washington, D.C., 1884.

Courtesy National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

buffer between the Nez Perce and non-Indians. But neither officials nor the majority of settlers focused on distinctions between tribes, and Territorial Governor Benjamin Potts (rejecting appeals from U.S. Indian Agent Peter Ronan) imposed a ban on sales of arms and ammunitions to all Indians, even though this directly harmed Salish hunters trying to get meat for the winter.

After the Nez Perce war, pressures for removal of the Salish only increased. In 1883, however, economic power in western Montana shifted decisively toward non-Indian control. In that year, workers completed the last leg of the Northern Pacific's transcontinental railroad, linking Montana to national and international markets. It was no coincidence that 1883 also marked the virtual extinction of wild bison. The Salish now supplemented their traditional food supply with some limited agriculture, but they continued to live largely by the old ways.

Słm̓xe Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys and most of the Salish stayed in the Bitterroot in spite of the worsening conditions. In 1883, the Chief told Senator Vest, "You want to place your foot upon our neck, and grind our face in the dust, but I will not go." Vest gave this account of his 1883 meeting with Chief Charlo:

"Two hours after reaching the [St. Mary's] mission Charlot, with four of his tribe, arrived, and with an equal number of white men, both sides being unarmed, we entered upon an interview which was at times dramatic and even stormy. Charlot is an Indian of fine appearance and impressed me as a brave and honest man. That he had been badly treated is unquestionable, and the history of the negotiations which culminated in the division of his tribe—part of them under Arlee, the second chief, being then on the Jocko Reservation, and part still in the Bitter Root Valley with Charlot—was, to say the least, most remarkable. I told Charlot that we had come from the Great Father at Washington to ascertain what was the real condition of affairs among the Flatheads... He replied through the interpreter that he had been shamefully treated, and that he had no confidence in the promises of any white man... He declared that he did not want anything from the Government except the privilege of living and dying in the Bitter Root Valley, where his ancestors had been buried... The chief... drew himself up with great dignity and said:

'You may carry me to Fort Missoula dead, but you will never carry me there alive. I heard before that your great father had printed a book showing my name to the treaty [the 1872 Garfield Agreement], but I never signed nor told anybody else to sign it for me. As to carrying me to the fort like a bag of grain, you did not talk that way when your people were going to California and came through my country sick and hungry. I had many warriors then and could have killed them all, but we nursed and fed them and did all we could to make them happy. Nearly all my warriors are dead, and I have only women and children. You have a foot on my head now, but then I had my foot on your head. There is not a drop of white blood on the hands of my people...' "

In 1884, Agent Peter Ronan took Słm̓xe Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys and a number of his headmen to Washington, D.C. for meetings with the Secretary of the Interior and President Chester Arthur. Chief Charlo was not swayed during the meetings, but he reaffirmed that he would not try to stop other Salish people from moving to the Reservation. Over the next few years, about forty families left the Bitterroot, though most did not receive the housing, fencing, and other assistance that the Government had promised those who would move. In 1888, the Missoula & Bitter Root Valley Railroad was built from Missoula south to Hamilton, directly through many of the allotments of the Salish, who were neither asked permission nor offered compensation.

In 1889, Congress appointed General Henry B. Carrington as Special Commissioner to remove the Salish. By this time, the tribe was experiencing more problems due in large part to the loss of so many resources. Słm̓xe Q̓<sup>w</sup>ox̓<sup>w</sup>qeys was having a harder time keeping his young men from getting into trouble. In August,

Arlee died in the Jocko Valley, removing one of the barriers to Chief Charlo's consideration of moving to the Flathead Reservation. On November 3, 1889, Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys signed an agreement to leave the Bitterroot. According to Victor Vanderburg, son of his principal sub-chief, he "changed his mind and agreed to move because so many of the Indians wanted to go."

Since the Salish expected to move in the spring of 1890, tribal farmers planted no crops. But Congress failed to appropriate funds for the removal. The same thing happened the next year. According to some observers, some people were nearly starving, and many were forced to sell their few household belongings to non-Indians in their struggle to get enough to eat.

Finally, in October 1891, General Henry B. Carrington and troops arrived to march the Salish north to the reservation. Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys called his people together and declared that the time had come. They prayed and announced that they would go. Several days later, following an all-night feast, the Salish assembled at dawn, loaded horses and wagons and started for the Jocko Reservation. The tribe

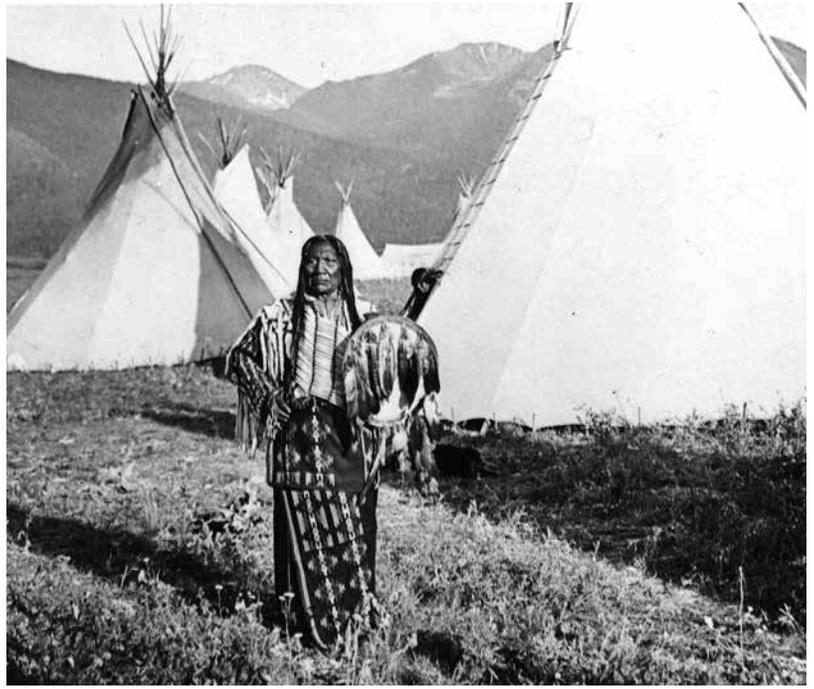


At St. Mary's Mission, 1891, just before the removal of the Salish from the Bitterroot Valley. Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys (Claw of the Little Grizzly — Chief Charlo) is left of center in top hat. To his left is his official translator, Michel Revais. To his right with beard is General Carrington, and to Carrington's right wearing bowler, Peter Ronan.

trailed through Stevensville before the silent gaze of the non-Indians. A survivor of the removal, Mary Ann Combs, remembered that they drug their tipi poles, but not everyone used a travois to carry their things. One woman, Louise Lumpry (the wife of Joe Lumpry), fell off her horse and broke her hip, and was crippled for life. Another man fell near Snłta'p̄cnálq<sup>w</sup> (the Schley area) and suffered a broken shoulder blade. Mrs. Combs remembered the spots where they camped. The first place was the other side of Missoula. Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys held prayer in the evening in camp.

Mrs. Combs likened the trip to a funeral march. She remembered all the people crying about having to leave their home. Other elders have said that the soldiers did not allow people to stop to go to the bathroom, and warned them they would be shot if they ran away. Children riding behind their mothers wondered why the grownups were crying. Years later, when Čłx<sup>w</sup>m̄x<sup>w</sup>m̄šńá (Sophie Moiese) was an old woman, she would suffer flashbacks, hearing the women crying as the people rode slowly north toward the Jocko Valley.

Mrs. Combs recalled that after the two day journey, the people camped at a place near Evaro called Nłe?slétk<sup>w</sup> (Two Small Creeks). Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys directed the Salish to present themselves in their finest ceremonial dress. The people pulled themselves together, and the Salish came into the Jocko, led by young warriors riding out ahead on their horses, shooting their guns in the air and singing. The women came behind, crying. At the Jocko church, a large group of tribal people awaited the Salish and welcomed them to the Flathead Reservation. Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys solemnly shook hands with each of the Pend d'Oreille, Salish, and Kootenai people who had waited to greet his band. He then led everyone into a mass conducted by the Jesuit fathers.



Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys (Claw of the Little Grizzly — Chief Charlo) and family at Arlee celebration, c. 1905.

It is said the Salish settled at the southern end of the reservation because they did not wish to move any further north than they had to. Despite the losses incurred in the removal, the Salish rebuilt their lives on the Flathead Reservation, gradually establishing successful family farms and ranches — even though the Government reneged on many of its promises of help. Most of the homes promised for Salish people were never built.

In the 1890s, Congress appointed the “Crow, Flathead, etc. Commission” to try to get Montana tribes to sell off large sections of their reservations. The Commission wanted to take the entire western half of the Flathead Reservation. But when they met with Chief Charlo, who had just been forced out of the Bitterroot Valley, he told the Commission, “You all know that I won’t sell a foot of land. You had better hunt some people who want money more than we do.”

U.S. Indian Agent Peter Ronan, until his death in 1893, helped block the imposition of the Allotment Act on the Flathead Reservation. But Ronan’s successors as Agent, Joseph Carter and William Smead, supported the taking of the tribes’ lands for non-Indian settlement, even though they knew that tribal members overwhelmingly and vehemently opposed allotment. In 1904, Joseph Dixon, a Missoula lawyer who had been elected to Congress two years earlier, pushed through Congress the Flathead Allotment Act. Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys, Antoine Moiese, Sam Resurrection, Qeyqeyši, and other leaders tried repeatedly to stop the government’s plans. Between 1905 and 1910, and even for years after that, they sent countless letters to the President, the Secretary of the Interior, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and other officials. They convened meetings to elect delegates, and then sent them to Washington, often at their own expense. In writing and in person, they delivered the same message: this is a direct violation of the Treaty of Hellgate, and we are all opposed to it. Stop the allotments and cancel the opening of the reservation. Despite the intense tribal opposition, the law was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt.

Słm̄xe Q̄<sup>w</sup>ox̄<sup>w</sup>qeys was spared the agony of seeing the Flathead Reservation opened to white settlement; he died on January 10, 1910, about four months before the arrival of the first homesteaders. Numerous prominent white Montanans lauded Chief Charlo at his death, even as many of them assisted or supported the

allotment act and other policies that undermined tribal sovereignty. Chief Charlo's son, Martin, was elected to replace him as chief. Martin Charlo served until his passing in 1941.

Mary Ann Combs remembered that after Słm̓xe Q̓w̓ox̓w̓qeys died in 1910, the government would not allow his widow, Isabel, to remain in his house. They evicted her. She died in 1925 at the age of 99.

Słm̓xe Q̓w̓ox̓w̓qeys guided the Salish people through a perilous passage in tribal history, managing to assert the rights and sovereign status of the Salish while avoiding direct conflict. He tenaciously and courageously carried on the highly disciplined policy of non-violent resistance that had been established by his father, X̓w̓et̓x̓ł̓c̓ín. Despite the barriers of language and writing, Słm̓xe Q̓w̓ox̓w̓qeys dealt skillfully and forcefully with many officials, in Montana and in Washington, in advancing the cause of the Salish nation. Despite the forced removal of the Salish to the Flathead Reservation, Chief Charlo's long battle to stay in the Bitterroot Valley provided the foundation for the CSKT's fierce defense, and restrengthening, of their treaty rights and cultural survival in the twentieth century — and beyond.



Above: Chief Martin Charlo during visit to Medicine Tree, 1923. Courtesy Bitter Root Valley Historical Society.

Above right: Słm̓xe Q̓w̓ox̓w̓qeys (Claw of the Little Grizzly — Chief Charlo) and subchief Antoine Moiese with women scalpdancers, Arlee celebration, c. 1905.

Below right: Słm̓xe Q̓w̓ox̓w̓qeys (Claw of the Little Grizzly — Chief Charlo), Arlee celebration, 1907. Photo by Edward Boos, courtesy Library of Congress.

## Tm̓ł̓c̓ín — No Horses (Chief Alexander)

(Information taken in part from *In the Name of the Salish and Kootenai Nation*, by Robert Bigart and Clarence Woodcock and in part from James Teit, “The Flathead Group,” part of Teit’s larger report, “The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus,” ed. Franz Boas, 45th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1927-28 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930), 295-396.)

The middle portrait in the Council chambers is Tm̓ł̓c̓ín, head chief of the upper Q̓ispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d’Oreille). The photograph was taken in 1859 in Fort Vancouver, Washington, and is one of the oldest known photographs of CSKT leaders. It is a group picture that includes the leaders of a number of plateau tribes with the Jesuit missionary Pierre Jean De Smet.

Tm̓ł̓c̓ín means No Horses. In 1909, elders told the ethnographer James Teit that this was an example of someone who “showed his modesty by taking a name meaning exactly the opposite of the characteristic for which he was noted... Thus a man very wealthy in horses might be called ‘No-Horses.’” The elders told Teit that when Tm̓ł̓c̓ín died in 1868, he owned about 400 horses.

Born about 1810, Tm̓ł̓c̓ín became a noted warrior as a young man. At one point in his younger years, according to a history written by the US Indian Agent Peter Ronan, Tm̓ł̓c̓ín volunteered to go alone to a trading post located in Crow territory to obtain powder and lead, which was badly needed by his tribe.

In the 1840s, he was chosen to be head chief of the S̓t̓q̓tk̓<sup>w</sup>ms̓c̓i̓nt̓ (People of the Broad Water — the Upper Q̓ispé or Pend d’Oreille). The q̓<sup>w</sup>aylqs (blackrobes — the Jesuit missionaries) had taken it upon themselves to say who was chief, and in 1848 they confirmed the people’s selection of Tm̓ł̓c̓ín. The Jesuits gave Tm̓ł̓c̓ín the Christian name Alexander, so he was known widely as Chief Alexander.

In 1854, Tm̓ł̓c̓ín gave permission to the Jesuits to establish a mission at Snyel̓mn̓ (Place Where You Surround Something). The Jesuits named it St. Ignatius Mission.

In April of that same year, somewhere near Flathead Lake, Tm̓ł̓c̓ín’s portrait was drawn by Gustavus Sohon. Sohon was an artist and translator who worked for Isaac Stevens, the newly appointed governor of Washington Territory. Sohon wrote that Tm̓ł̓c̓ín was “noted for his high-toned, sterling and noble traits of character. He is a brave man. When a party of his tribe had stolen horses from Fort Benton on the Missouri in 1853, he started with only five of his men and carried them back, passing through the whole camp of the Blackfeet Indians, then most deadly enemies.”



Tm̓ł̓c̓ín (No Horses — Chief Alexander), April 21, 1854.  
Portrait by Gustavus Sohon. Courtesy National Anthropological Archives.

In July 1855, Tm̓łx̓łcín was an active participant in the Hellgate Treaty negotiations. He joined other leaders in signing the treaty.

The minutes of the 1855 Hellgate Treaty negotiations — even with the limitations of very poor translators and transcribers of uncertain ability — give us a glimpse of some of Tm̓łx̓łcín's qualities as a leader: judicious, level-headed, courageous, flexible yet firm. He, along with other leaders of the Pend d'Oreille, Salish, and Kootenai nations, sat down with open minds to negotiate an agreement with Isaac Stevens and other US officials. They noted they had always been at peace with non-Indians, and wondered why they needed a treaty at all. Gradually, it seems to have become clear to tribal leaders that Stevens intended to force them onto a reservation and to secure some kind of claim to the majority of their lands. Tm̓łx̓łcín



Tribal leaders with Jesuit missionary Pierre-Jean De Smet, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 1859. Tm̓łx̓łcín (No Horses — Chief Alexander) is seated, second from left. Standing at right is Francois Saxa (c.1820-1910), the son of Big Ignace LaMoose, the Iroquois fur trapper who settled among the Salish around 1819 and helped lead delegations to St. Louis in search of the Blackrobes. Courtesy Jesuit Oregon Province Archives, Gonzaga University.

was blunt: “I think it is too small, what you want to give me.” As the tenor of the negotiations changed, Tm̓łx̓łcín told Stevens, “When you first talked, you talked good; now you talk sharp; you talk like a Blackfoot.” Along with the Salish head chief, X̓w̓ełx̓łcín (Many Horses — Chief Victor), Tm̓łx̓łcín successfully resisted Stevens' attempts to pressure the tribes into accepting a single reservation. X̓w̓ełx̓łcín refused the Government's demands that the Salish relinquish the Bitterroot Valley, and Tm̓łx̓łcín refused to cede the Flathead Lake-Mission Valley area.

Later that fall, at the Judith River Treaty meeting, Tm̓łx̓łcín again showed his leadership abilities — and this time, even enemy tribes appear to have shown their respect. In this treaty, Stevens sought to divide the buffalo hunting grounds east of the Continental Divide among the various tribes that hunted there. Seven tribes were present: Salish, Pend d'Oreille, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Piegan, and Blood. It was difficult logistically to gather all these tribes in one place, and by the time Tm̓łx̓łcín and the Pend d'Oreille arrived, Stevens had already decided that the Sweetgrass Hills would belong to the Blackfeet and their allies. Tm̓łx̓łcín fearlessly addressed the gathering:

“A long time ago our people, our ancestors belonged in this country. The country around the Three Buttes [from the Salish-Pend d'Oreille placename Ččatalqn — Three Peaks — the Sweetgrass Hills]. We had many people on this side of the mountains, and now you have shown us only a narrow ridge to hunt on...

“A long time ago our people used to hunt about the Three Buttes and the Blackfeet lived far north. When my Father was living he told me that was an old road for our people.

“We Indians were all well pleased when we came together here in friendship. Now you point us our a little piece of land to hunt our game on. When we were enemies, I always crossed over there, and why should I not now, when we are friends?”

None of the other chiefs present contested Tm̓łx̓łcín's statement.

In the spring of 1856 — the year after the treaties — Tmłxł́cín accompanied the Indian agent and trader John Owen to Fort Benton to obtain ammunition for his people. On the return trip, according to Owen, Tmłxł́cín with just two of his men set out through territory occupied at the time by their Blackfeet enemies. Along the way, they killed nine buffalo on the plains, and rejoined Major Owen at the eastern base of the Rockies.

Tmłxł́cín died in about 1868, and was succeeded as head chief by X<sup>w</sup>eʔx<sup>w</sup>itsče (Many Grizzly Bears, in the Tuńáxn dialect —Michel) (d. 1909).

Tmłxł́cín had led the Qlispé people with wisdom and fearlessness through a critical moment in tribal history, helping establish the treaty-bound rights and powers that today form the legal and political foundation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.




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Right: Standing at right, Nšalqn (Charley Michel) (c. 1863-1929), head chief of the upper Kalispel (Pend d'Oreille) from 1909 to 1929.  
 Courtesy Doug Allard.

Mose Michell (c. 1885-1944), head chief of the uper Kalispel (Pend d'Oreille) from 1929 to 1944, at Nčmqné (Polson area), c. 1935. Courtesy Montana Historical Society.

